

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method for testing scanner updates, comprising:
  - 2 (a) distributing a full-release scanner update from a server to a plurality of
  - 3 computers utilizing a network;
  - 4 (b) distributing a pre-release scanner update from the server to the computers
  - 5 utilizing the network;
  - 6 (c) executing the full-release scanner update on the computers for security
  - 7 scanning;
  - 8 (d) executing the pre-release scanner update on the computers for testing
  - 9 purposes; and
  - 10 (e) transmitting results of the testing from the computers to the server utilizing
  - 11 the network.
- 1 2. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the full-release scanner update and
- 2 the pre-release scanner update are distributed simultaneously.
- 1 3. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the full-release scanner update and
- 2 the pre-release scanner update are distributed together.
- 1 4. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the pre-release scanner update is
- 2 distributed on a periodic basis.
- 1 5. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the pre-release scanner update is
- 2 distributed with virus signatures.
- 1 6. The method as recited in claim 1, and further comprising automatically
- 2 determining whether a pre-release scanner update exists, and conditionally

3       distributing the pre-release scanner update from the server if the pre-release  
4       scanner update exists.

1       7.      The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the pre-release scanner update is  
2       executed when the computers are idle.

1       8.      The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the pre-release scanner update is  
2       executed automatically when the computers are idle.

1       9.      The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the results are transmitted to a  
2       quality assurance administrator.

1       10.     The method as recited in claim 1, and further comprising comparing results  
2       of the execution of the full-release scanner update and the pre-release scanner  
3       update.

1       11.     The method as recited in claim 10, wherein the comparison occurs on the  
2       computers.

1       12.     The method as recited in claim 11, and further comprising transmitting  
2       results of the comparison from the computers to the server utilizing the  
3       network.

1       13.     The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the network includes the Internet.

1       14.     The method as recited in claim 10, and further comprising determining  
2       whether a virus is detected by the execution of the pre-release scanner update  
3       and not the full-release scanner update based on the comparison.

1       15.     The method as recited in claim 14, and further comprising removing the  
2       virus.

1 16. The method as recited in claim 14, and further comprising storing a record of  
2 the virus.

1 17. The method as recited in claim 14, and further comprising reporting the  
2 virus.

1 18. The method as recited in claim 1, and further comprising detecting faults  
2 associated with the execution of the pre-release scanner update.

1 19. The method as recited in claim 18, and further comprising transmitting a  
2 record of the faults from the computers to the server utilizing the network.

1 20. The method as recited in claim 18, and further comprising ceasing the  
2 execution of the pre-release scanner update on the computers in response to  
3 the detection of the faults.

1 21. The method as recited in claim 20, and further comprising re-executing the  
2 pre-release scanner update on the computers after ceasing the execution.

1 22. The method as recited in claim 18, and further comprising counting a number  
2 of the faults, and conditionally terminating the pre-release scanner update on  
3 the computers based on the number.

1 23. The method as recited in claim 22, wherein the faults include at least one of  
2 delays, failures, crashes, and false alarms.

1 24. The method as recited in claim 1, and further comprising detecting a duration  
2 of the execution of the pre-release scanner update.

1    25. The method as recited in claim 24, and further comprising transmitting a  
2    record of the duration from the computers to the server utilizing the network.

1    26. The method as recited in claim 1, and further comprising utilizing the results  
2    to modify the pre-release scanner update before releasing the pre-release  
3    scanner update as a full-release scanner update.

1    27. A computer program product for testing scanner updates, comprising:  
2    (a) computer code for distributing a full-release scanner update from a server to  
3    a plurality of computers utilizing a network;  
4    (b) computer code for distributing a pre-release scanner update from the server  
5    to the computers utilizing the network;  
6    (c) computer code for executing the full-release scanner update on the computers  
7    for security scanning;  
8    (d) computer code for executing the pre-release scanner update on the computers  
9    for testing purposes; and  
10   (e) computer code for transmitting results of the testing from the computers to  
11   the server utilizing the network.

1    28. A system for testing scanner updates, comprising:  
2    (a) logic for distributing a full-release scanner update from a server to a plurality  
3    of computers utilizing a network;  
4    (b) logic for distributing a pre-release scanner update from the server to the  
5    computers utilizing the network;  
6    (c) logic for executing the full-release scanner update on the computers for  
7    security scanning;  
8    (d) logic for executing the pre-release scanner update on the computers for  
9    testing purposes; and  
10   (e) logic for transmitting results of the testing from the computers to the server  
11   utilizing the network.

1    29. A server-based method for testing scanner updates, comprising:

2    (a) distributing a full-release scanner update from a server to a plurality of

3    computers utilizing a network;

4    (b) distributing a pre-release scanner update from the server to the computers

5    utilizing the network;

6    (c) receiving results of the execution of the full-release scanner update and the

7    pre-release scanner update from the computers;

8    (d) modifying the pre-release scanner update before releasing the pre-release

9    scanner update as a full-release scanner update based on the results.

1    30. A client-based method for testing scanner updates, comprising:

2    (a) receiving from a server a full-release scanner update at a computer utilizing a

3    network;

4    (b) receiving from the server a pre-release scanner update at the computer

5    utilizing the network;

6    (c) executing the full-release scanner update on the computer for security

7    scanning;

8    (d) executing the pre-release scanner update on the computer for testing

9    purposes; and

10   (e) transmitting results of the testing from the computer to the server utilizing

11   the network.

1    31. A method for testing scanner updates, comprising:

2    (a) distributing a full-release scanner update from a server to a plurality of

3    computers utilizing a network;

4    (b) distributing a pre-release scanner update from the server to the computers

5    simultaneously with the full-release update utilizing the network;

6    (c) executing the full-release scanner update on the computers for security

7    scanning;

8    (d) determining whether the computers are idle;

9 (e) automatically executing the pre-release scanner update on the computers for  
10 testing purposes upon the computers being determined to be idle;  
11 (f) comparing results of the execution of the full-release scanner update and the  
12 pre-release scanner update;  
13 (g) determining whether a virus is detected by the execution of the pre-release  
14 scanner update and not by the full-release scanner update based on the  
15 comparison;  
16 (h) storing a record of the detected virus;  
17 (i) removing the detected virus;  
18 (j) detecting faults associated with the execution of the pre-release scanner  
19 update;  
20 (k) ceasing the execution of the pre-release scanner update on the computers in  
21 response to the detection of at least one fault;  
22 (l) re-executing the pre-release scanner update on the computers after ceasing  
23 the execution;  
24 (m) counting a number of the faults;  
25 (n) conditionally re-executing the pre-release scanner update on the computers if  
26 the number exceeds a predetermined number within a predetermined amount  
27 of time;  
28 (o) storing a record of the faults;  
29 (p) transmitting results relating to the viruses and faults from the computers to  
30 the server utilizing the network; and  
31 (q) modifying the pre-release scanner update at the server before releasing the  
32 pre-release scanner update as a full-release scanner update based on the  
33 results.